

2021 Household Pulse Survey User Notes

Phase 3.2

Date: September 22, 2021

[Release Note on Updated Universes for Phase 3.1 Childcare Impact Variables](#)

The [Public Use File \(PUF\) data dictionaries](#) available for Weeks 28-33 (Phase 3.1) incorrectly list the universe for CHLDIMPCT1-CHLDIMPCT9 as CHLDCARE = 1 and SCHLFOOD = 1.

The correct universe for these nine variables should be CHLDCARE = 1, as these items are asked regardless of responses to SCHLFOOD. This issue only affects the data dictionaries and the public-use files are correct.

The publicly available data dictionaries for weeks 34-36 correctly list the CHLDIMPCT1-CHLDIMPCT9 universe as CHLDCARE = 1.

Date: September 8, 2021

[Release Note on Updated Rental Assistance Question for Week 36](#)

Beginning in Week 36 the universe for the Household Pulse Survey (HPS) question about rental assistance was updated to include all respondents living in renter-occupied housing units. For collection Week 34 (July 21-August 2) and Week 35 (August 4-16), the question was asked of respondents living in renter-occupied housing units who reported not being current on rental payments.

Currently this question is only included in Housing Table 3b. The universe for that table remains households not current on rental payments.

[Release Note on Updated Interactive Data Tool](#)

Data users will notice a large percentage increase in the Food Assistance for Children indicator for Week 36. This is attributable to a large increase in the number of children receiving food assistance at school and is likely correlated with many children returning to in-person schooling during this collection cycle. More information is available in Food Table 5 on the [main HPS table webpage](#).

Date: August 25, 2021

[Release Note on Updated Phase 3.2 Table Specifications](#)

Data users can find the most updated table specifications on the main [Technical Documentation](#) webpage.

Food Table 5

For Week 35 the label for column E has been slightly modified to read “Received or used an EBT card to help buy groceries” to better reflect current questionnaire content. For Week 34 the label previously read “Received an EBT card to help buy groceries.”

Employment Table 4

For Week 34 this table was published missing the “None of the Above” column (column V in the updated table specification). The Week 34 table has been reproduced with the missing column included and this change will be reflected in Week 35 and all remaining 3.2 table releases.

Child Tax Credit Table 1

When the Week 34 tables were initially published, this table incorrectly had the reference period of “in the last 7 days.” The Week 34 table was corrected to read “in the last 4 weeks,” and this change will be reflected in Week 35 and all remaining 3.2 table releases.

Date: August 11, 2021

Release Note on Phase 3.2 Collection of the Household Pulse Survey

Following a two-week break in data collection, the Household Pulse Survey has now entered Phase 3.2. Beginning with the Week 34 release (collection period July 21 – August 2, 2021), there have been multiple changes to the questionnaire, including the addition of new questions, the adjustment of existing questions, and the removal of some questions for which utility has declined over time (see Release Note on New Content and Updated Questionnaire below).

Phase 3.2 is currently scheduled to collect data through the beginning of October 2021. Users can access the Phase 3.2 questionnaire on the [Measuring Household Experiences during the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#) website.

Release Note on New Content and Updated Questionnaire

New Questions for Phase 3.2

Beginning with Week 34 (collection period July 21, 2021 – August 2, 2021), the Household Pulse Survey questionnaire changed to include the following new topics:

- Sexual orientation and gender identity (see Release Note on Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity below for more information)
- Age groups of children in household
- COVID-19 vaccinations for children 12 and older
- Child Tax Credit payments and usage
- Differentiation of telephone and video telehealth visits for both adults and children who reported telehealth visits
- Preventive healthcare visits for children (previous questions asked about skipped and delayed visits)
- Months behind on rental and mortgage/loan payments

- Rental assistance from state and local governments
- Household energy expenditures and consumption
- Children’s summer educational activities

Updated Questions for Phase 3.2

Additionally, some items have been adjusted to include different reference periods, while others have been changed in more substantive ways. Adjusted questionnaire items include:

- School enrollment for children – the survey now asks separately for the number of children enrolled in public school, private school, and home school
- Adult vaccine questions – wording and response categories have been slightly adjusted to reflect current vaccination landscape
- Reasons for not being currently employed – response options have been updated
- Working and volunteering outside of home – reference period has been updated, and locations for work and volunteering have been changed as well
- Changes in shopping behavior, services shopping, and related spending have been consolidated into a single survey item
- Mental health question battery – reference period for the four mental health questions on feeling anxious, worrying, losing interest, and feeling down has been changed from last 7 days to previous two weeks

Removed Questions for Phase 3.2

During this same collection period, the following questions were removed from the survey due to a decline in their utility:

- COVID-19 vaccinations – follow-up question asked of those who said they did not need a vaccine has been removed, as have the questions about changes in pandemic-related preventive behaviors
- Expected loss in employment income – question has been removed
- Telework – two questions about remote work have been removed
- Unemployment insurance – questions about applying for and receiving unemployment insurance have been removed
- Social security benefits – battery of questions about applying for and receiving Social Security benefits have been removed
- Stimulus questions – these questions have been replaced with similar questions about Child Tax Credit payments
- Planned trips and transportation – these questions have been removed
- Money spent on household food – previous questions about money spent on household food have been removed
- The majority of questions about household education have been removed for this cycle of the survey

Release Note on the Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The [Household Pulse Survey \(HPS\)](#) started asking about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in Phase 3.2. The SOGI estimates discussed in this section are sourced to the following new demographic items and will be included for the remainder of this Phase.

D6 What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

D7 Do you currently describe yourself as male, female or transgender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ None of these

D9 Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?

- ☐ Gay or lesbian
- ☐ Straight, that is not gay or lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Something else
- ☐ I don't know

Based on recommendations provided by the [Interagency Technical Working Group on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Items in the Household Pulse Survey](#), and after discussions with stakeholders both inside and outside the Census Bureau, the following tabulation breakdowns are now included in the most recent version of the HPS detailed tables.

Sex at birth
Male
Female
Gender
Cisgender male
Cisgender female
Transgender
None of these
Did not report
Sexual orientation
Gay or lesbian
Straight
Bisexual
Something else
I don't know
Did not report

For more information on how these categories are specified, data users can find the Phase 3.2 HPS Table Specifications on the main [technical documentation webpage](#).

To produce meaningful demographic breakdowns for as many subnational geographies as possible, the detailed tables also now include the following Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) summary measure:

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
Yes
No
Other
Did not report

Survey respondents are categorized as LGBT if they report a sex at birth that does not align with their current gender identity; report a sexual orientation of gay, lesbian or bisexual; or if they currently identify as transgender.

Respondents whose sex at birth aligns with their current gender identity and who select straight on the sexual orientation question are categorized as non-LGBT.

Respondents who select *none of these* on the current gender question and either *something else, I don't know* or *straight* on the sexual orientation question are categorized as other. Additionally, respondents whose sex at birth aligns with their current gender identity but who select either *something else* or *I don't know* on the sexual orientation question are also categorized as other.

This dissemination approach was decided following careful deliberation with internal and external stakeholders but is not intended to serve as a standard for presenting SOGI measurement in other surveys. As part of the Census Bureau's Experimental Data Products series, the HPS was designed to have low respondent burden, provide quick turnaround on product releases, and produce estimates that meet urgent public needs. The HPS questions related to sexual orientation and gender identity aim

to understand the impact of the coronavirus pandemic across different subpopulations. However, because the HPS is designed to rapidly produce experimental estimates, caution should be exercised when using these data as standalone markers of the prevalence of LGBT adults in the general population.

Release Note on Updated Interactive Data Tool

The [Household Pulse Survey Interactive Tool](#) has been updated with a number of new and removed indicators.

Due to the survey questionnaire changes for Phase 3.2, the following indicators will no longer be updated in the tool:

- Food assistance from school – the question that sourced this indicator has changed significantly, therefore this measure has been replaced with a new food assistance indicator
- Childcare disruptions – the question that sourced this indicator has changed significantly, therefore this measure has been replaced with a childcare indicator
- Expected loss in employment income – the question that sourced this indicator has been removed from the questionnaire, however, previously release data will continue to reside on the tool
- Telework (because of coronavirus) – the question that sourced this indicator has been removed from the questionnaire, however, previously release data will continue to reside on the tool
- Planned trips - the question that sourced this indicator has been removed from the questionnaire, however, previously release data will continue to reside on the tool

Due to the survey questionnaire changes, the following indicators were added to the tool:

- Childcare disruptions for kids under 5 – percentage of adults in households where children under 5 years old were unable to attend daycare or another childcare arrangement in the last 4 weeks
- Worked onsite at a workplace – percentage of adults in households where someone worked onsite at a workplace in the last 7 days
- Food assistance for children – percentage of adults in households where children received food assistance in the last 7 days
- Unable to pay energy bill – percentage of adults living in households who were unable to pay an energy bill in-full in the last 12 months
- Child Tax Credit spending – percentage of adults living in households who received a Child Tax Credit payment in the last 4 weeks who either mostly spent it or used it to pay down debt

Release Note on New Rental Assistance Question for Phase 3.2

Phase 3.2 of the HPS includes a new question about rental assistance from state and local governments.

HSE7 Have you or anyone in your household applied for emergency rental assistance through your state or local government to cover your unpaid rent or utility bills?

- ☐ My household applied and received assistance
- ☐ My household applied and is waiting for a response
- ☐ My household applied and the application was denied
- ☐ My household did not apply

For collection Week 34 (July 21-August 2) and Week 35 (August 4-16), the question will be asked of respondents living in renter-occupied housing units who reported not being current on rental payments.

However, to capture renters who are current on housing payments *because* of rental assistance programs, this question will be asked of all respondents living in renter-occupied housing units, regardless of payment status, beginning with collection Week 36 (August 18-30).